

Town to Combat Pond Weeds

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The Duxbury Conservation Commission reported to selectmen this week that it is committed to ridding both Lower Chandler Mill pond and Island Creek pond of the aquatic weed, fanwort, which is choking the life out of these ponds.

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According to a study of the ponds commissioned last year by Town Meeting, the water quality of both ponds is excellent but both have a problem with the out-of-control growth of fanwort, a non-native plant that takes over ponds and fills them in with sediment. To destroy the fanwort in Lower Chandler pond, Ken Wagner, a scientist from the company that did the study, recommended treating the fanwort with the aquatic herbicide "Sonar," (liquid fluridone) which can be specially formulated to kill this weed alone. Wagner said he is not usually in favor of using chemicals in nature but recommended using Sonar in Lower Chandler pond because it is very safe - water is even drinkable during use - and targets only the fanwort.

The cost of the Sonar treatment, which could last between 1-5 years, is \$16,000. The Conservation Commission is requesting \$10,000 for Lower Chandler Mill pond in its capital budget. Also, additional funding will be needed each year to monitor the weed growth and maybe to support the chemical treatment with harvesting.

However, there is one problem with this solution. Lower Chandler Mill pond is shared equally by Pembroke, which would be expected to split the cost of the herbicide treatment because destroying fanwort on half the pond would not accomplish anything. So far there has been no response to this report by Pembroke's Conservation Commission. Lakeshore Drive resident Charles Zisko presented the overgrowth problem to Pembroke selectmen last year and said that board and at least 20 Pembroke residents were interested in finding a solution.

For Island Creek pond, the solution is different. Sonar cannot be used in this pond because cranberry bogs use water from it. Last year, Town Meeting funded a pond-wide harvest of the fanwort at a cost of \$11,000, and because the pond is so shallow, the weed was almost completely eradicated. Wagner recommended harvesting Island Creek pond bi-annually and monitoring the weed-growth annually. The Conservation Commission is requesting \$10,000 for this pond in its capital budget.